

Submission of Recommendations on Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) Revitalization from African Women and Girls

As African women and girls committed to gender equality and the full realization of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, we recognize the critical role that CSW plays in shaping global commitments and accountability for women's rights and gender equality.

In this regard, we are pleased to present the collective recommendations from 13 consultations conducted across all five subregions of Africa, engaging 3,136 stakeholders. These efforts culminated in a final consultation held in February 2025 in Gaborone, Botswana, that brought together an additional 100 women and girls who contributed to the CSW revitalization recommendations.

Enhanced CSW's Policy Relevance for more strategic commitments

- Embed CSW commitments in national actions plans and priorities involving bodies like gender commissions and women's rights organizations in the evaluation and monitoring of programs and policies.
- Strengthen community-led monitoring mechanisms, such as scorecards and citizen report cards, to track performance on gender policy implementation and fund these mechanisms.

Strengthened accountability mechanisms and support for implementation of CSW commitments

- Ensure meaningful participation of diverse organizations, including those representing women and girls from marginalized and structurally excluded groups, for example women and girls with disability, women and girls from rural area and women and girls living with HIV/AIDS.
- Establish sustainable communication and consultation networks to maintain engagement beyond CSW sessions.
- Move beyond token inclusion by guaranteeing women's rights and girl and young women led organizations participation and ensure they have a substantive role in decision-making processes rather than limiting them to observer status.
- Develop formal mechanisms that allow grassroots Women Rights Organizations (WROs) and girl and young women led organizations to directly contribute to national and regional monitoring process and contribute to reports, ensuring their voices shape policy decisions.
- Ensure WROs and girl and young women led organizations have access to accurate, disaggregated data and regular progress updates. This equips them with tools to hold governments accountable and track gender equality commitments effectively.
- Invest in a 'one stop shop' standardized dashboard incorporating all relevant gender equality commitments, this will allow for easier tracking and monitoring.
- Provide the Pan-African Parliament legislative authority to sanction countries that fall back on their commitments
- Enhance and expand the collection and use of gender-disaggregated data to identify gaps, strengthen accountability, and ensure compliance.
- Engage WROs and girl and young women led organizations in designing accountability mechanisms, monitoring violations and preparing shadow/alterative reports.
- Develop standardized integrated reporting templates that merge indicators from the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW), with regional normative frameworks of the African Union (AU) Gender Scorecard, and the Maputo Protocol. This approach will minimize redundancy, streamline data collection, and enhance efficiency in reporting.
- Strengthen ministerial and intergovernmental collaboration efforts through advocating for cross sectoral organising between gender ministries and other key ministries such as education, finance, health and other key ministries.

Enhance and facilitate the meaningful participation and contributions of all stakeholders, with a particular focus on marginalized and structurally excluded groups.

- Strengthen mechanisms to hold ECOSOC-accredited organizations accountable for accrediting women's rights organizations (WROs). This includes ensuring transparency in the allocation of accreditation slots and implementing sanctions against organizations that do not utilize their accreditation, thereby reducing gatekeeping.
- Review and revise the eligibility criteria for acquiring ECOSOC accreditation to make it more accessible to women's rights organizations (WROs), particularly those from the Global South. This includes simplifying application processes, reducing bureaucratic barriers, and ensuring that accreditation requirements reflect the diverse structures and capacities of grassroots and feminist organizations working to advance gender equality.
- Expand accreditation slots for continental networks and membership-based organizations to ensure adequate representation of their members.
- Establish quotas or reserved seats for women and girls and especially those from marginalized and excluded groups in Government delegations and in CSW panels and discussions to ensure inclusive representation and diverse perspectives.
- **Rotate the venue of CSW** beyond the UN headquarters in New York to include locations in the global south thus enhancing access. This can be done by identifying venues with UN headquarters and infrastructure, reviewing the process and organization of work to assess the role of permanent missions, and exploring funding mechanisms to support these efforts.
- Member states through the national gender ministries should prioritize and allocate dedicated resources for CSW-related activities, including preparation, training, travel for WROs and girl and young women led organization in the delegations, and post-CSW implementation
- Secure civil society representation in negotiations by ensuring there are regional seats for Africa, Europe, Asia Pacific, Latin America and North America.
- Promote and support initiatives like Africa Disrupt CSW that create alternative spaces for African women and girls to engage meaningfully in CSW discussions, ensuring their perspectives and priorities are effectively represented in global gender equality dialogues.

